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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SCUL](#) [KISL](#) [KIRF](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: AHMADIYAHS SAY THEIR SITUATION REMAINS PRECARIOUS

REF: JAKARTA 7719

Classified By: Poloff Sanjay Ramesh, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In the face of intimidation by Islamic fundamentalists, Ahmadiyah leaders characterized their situation in Indonesia as precarious (Reftel). They noted that the Ahmadiyah community continues to experience sporadic acts of violence: in recent months a mob ransacked an Ahmadiyah mosque near Bogor, while the local police in Bandung refused permission for a peaceful public meeting to take place. Community leaders also registered grave concern over the implementation of Sharia law in local districts across Indonesia, as the Ahmadiyah interpretation of Sharia diverges from that of mainstream Islam. Proponents of Sharia in Indonesia are reportedly in a quandary over its applicability to the Ahmadiyahs. End Summary.

SPORADIC VIOLENCE CONTINUES

¶2. (C) During an initial visit by Poloff, Ahmadiyah spokesman Mubarik and leader of the Jakarta congregation, Zafrullah Ahmad Pontoh, portrayed their community as living in constant apprehension of the next major Anti-Ahmadiyah outburst. They argued that the Government of Indonesia's (GOI) continuing inaction against those who had demolished the Ahmadiyah headquarters in Bogor and the mobs in Lombok that had driven Ahmadiyah families out of their homes gave a green light to Muslim radicals and other troublemakers to target the Ahmadiyahs with impunity (Reftel). In this context, they listed two recent acts against them: approximately two months ago, an Ahmadiyah mosque in Bogor was ransacked and vandalized following Friday prayers while in a second incident, the local police in Bandung, without any apparent legal basis, disbanded a peaceful prayer assembly and forced the gathered Ahmadiyahs to disperse. Ahmadiyah leaders remain fearful that further such incidents could take place.

WARY OF SUNNI VERSION OF SHARIA LAW

¶3. (C) Ahmadiyah leaders also raised the possible application of Sharia law to their community as a major concern. Describing Sharia law as "complex" and subject to various interpretations, they asserted that the Ahmadiyahs have their own unique take on Sharia. Consequently, they did not want to see a Sunni version of Sharia imposed on the Ahmadiyah community. They added that the proponents of Sharia law in Indonesia - including Islamic parties and/or groups such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and Hizb ul Tahrir - faced a theological quandary over its applicability to the Ahmadiyah. On the one hand, some adherents of these groups espoused applying Sharia law to the Ahmadiyah so that they would be subject to punishments for violating orthodox Islamic teaching. Other hardcore Islamists objected on the grounds that applying Sharia law to the Ahmadiyahs would constitute a tacit admission of their status as Muslims.

¶4. (SBU) In addition, the Ahmadiyahs say that the central government has yet to take any kind of stand against local district heads (bupati) and police who issued joint decrees banning all Ahmadiyah activity in their districts. Thus far, five districts - Bogor, Lombok, Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Cianjur - have implemented such decrees. The Ahmadiyah leaders claimed that these decrees lacked a legal basis as the Indonesian constitution specified that the national government had complete authority over all religious matters.

They described inaction by the Indonesian government as emboldening other local authorities to pass decrees against the Ahmadiyahs. They also feared that this inaction by the national government could set a dangerous precedent that allowed local authorities to appropriate power over religious matters.

¶5. (C) Ahmadiyah leaders ascribed the GOI's lack of attention to the plight of the Ahmadiyahs, not to religious intolerance, but rather to the government's fear of being perceived as "pro-Ahmadiyah". They claimed that government did not have the appetite to risk alienating the majority mainstream Muslim community, especially as it was already threatened with a decline in popularity stemming from economic problems such as high unemployment.

¶6. (C) Comment: As the Ahmadiyahs continue to experience sporadic acts of violence, their leaders retain little faith that the GOI will act to alleviate their plight. They are correct that the GOI has not yet visibly applied a workable mechanism to reverse local government decrees that exceed local officials' authority, notwithstanding announcement of a review mechanism to be applied by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

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